

4-5-2019

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Recommended Citation

Bima, Hanna; Cheatham, Carly; and Frautschy, Isabelle, "A REVIEW OF PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT FOSTER PARENTS IN IMPLEMENTING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES" (2019). *University Research Symposium*. 245.
https://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/rsp_urs/245

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A Review of Programs to Support Foster Parents in Implementing Language Development Strategies

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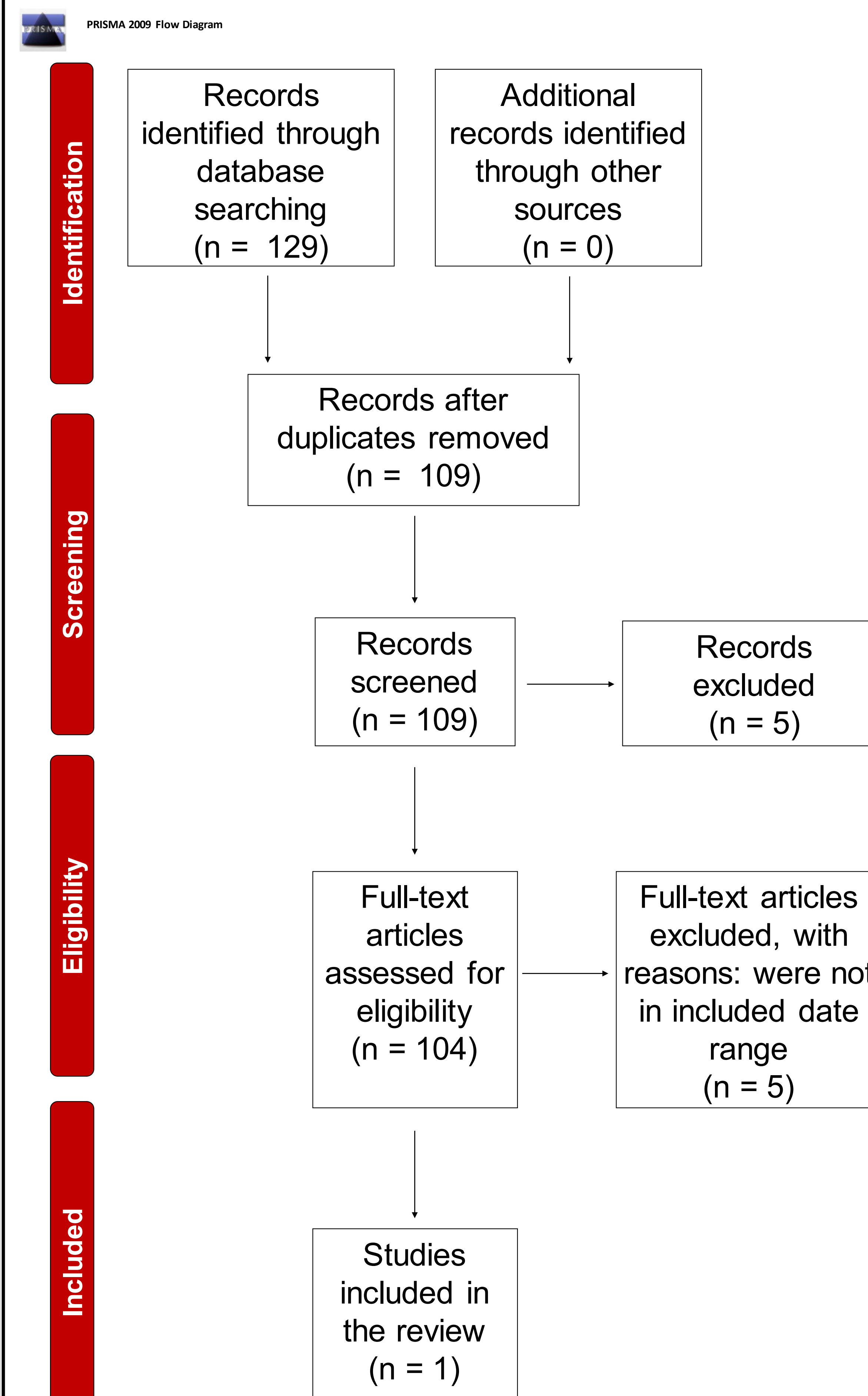
Introduction

- Young children in foster care are at a higher risk for communication delays than are children in stable households (Stock & Fisher, 2006).
- Educating foster parents in language development strategies may be one way to prevent later language delays and/or disorders.
- The purpose of this review was to explore studies that included educational programs for foster care parents and identify if language development strategies were targeted.

Method

- 7 databases were used to identify articles relevant for the review: CINAHL Plus, ComDisDome, Education Full Text, ERIC (EBSCO), Family Studies Abstracts, PubMed, PsycINFO
- Each database was searched using the following search terms: foster care AND parents OR caregivers OR foster parents AND infants OR toddlers OR preschoolers AND language
- Studies that met eligibility were coded for the following: (a) study design; (b) participants information; (c) intervention strategies targeted; (d) intended outcomes for the child in foster care; and (e) the techniques used to teach foster parents the targeted intervention strategies

PRISMA Chart (Moher et al., 2009)



Results

- Forty studies were conducted in the US
- Only one article met all criteria (Bernard et al, 2017).
 - RCT
 - 52 typically developing foster children ($M = 39.52$ months)
 - 24 children received Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC) intervention and 28 received Developmental Education for Families (DEF) intervention.
 - Parents received support to enhance responsiveness, transitioning foster children into a nurturing home environment.
 - ABC group had higher scores on a receptive language than the DEF group.

Conclusion

- The results of this review may support researchers and other professionals in designing interventions that not only support the general development and mental health of children in foster care, but also successfully enhance language development, preventing further language delays or disorders as well as later difficulties in academics and beyond
- Continued research is necessary to understand language development in children in foster care and guide the development of programs that support foster parents in implementing language development strategies.

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Acknowledgments

Our gratitude goes to Chris Worland at the ISU Milner Library for his suggestions and instruction during our research process.



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